6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar



754 is truly human. Belief in magic and witchcraft, symbolic
789 hurts and cures, and the like, are very deep in human nature; reason and culture do not efface it. It is one of the earliest heirlooms of the human family, and it will in all probability persist to the end. We cannot think of man as being without it.* Hence the interest in investigating it.

791 But now, as Patelin's Judge said to the draper, let us return *à nos moutons*. There is nothing secret about the profession of the Panikkar. His rites are secret of course. They are *his* secret. But his profession is an honourable one. He is not ashamed of it, nor will he deny it. That is, so long as he confines his talents to the practice of *good* magic.

754 With the professor of the more lucrative *black magic*, it is quite another thing. No one will ever admit publicly that he practises *black magic*.

*Black magic.*—It would never do to avoid altogether the subject of black magic, which is cultivated and practised to a much greater extent in Malabar than elsewhere in the Southern Presidency. I hope to have more to say about it later on when we come to description of some of the lower races, and for the present we must be content with a rather bare description of it. We have seen already that a few Nambûtiri Brahmans practise it. A few Nâyars also do so. But as a rule the man who really works in black magic is the Parayan.
754 The old story. It is always the man of inferior race who
564 is superior in black magic. The Parayans of Malabar are not, I think, identical with the Pariahs (Parayas) of Southern India. There are obvious differences in physique. In parts of rural Malabar one may see a Parayan's little hut far away on the hill side, but one tries in vain to see and speak to its inmates, who flee into the jungle. The Parayans are complete outcastes, and their presence carries pollution to one of any superior caste within about a furlong. It is not too much to say that, as a rule, they are abhorred as the lowest of the low. They eat beef, and are there-
[262] fore quite outside the pale of Hinduism. I have
[673] heard of fairly well authenticated cases of their stealing children of Nâyars, hiding them away in the forest and

[171] * The reader who has not given much attention to the subject of Folklore, may be surprised by the evidence of the persistence of these beliefs in England, available in the publications of the Folklore Society, London. See "County Folklore," chapters on Witchcraft, etc.

bringing them up as their own. The belief that they will steal children helps to some extent to make them dreaded as well as abhorred, but it is as skilled professors of black magic that they are really feared. Ôḍi is the name of the cult, and those who follow it, Parayans as a rule, are able to do many wonderful things. The ordeals to be gone through by the apprentice in the Ôḍi cult are rather trying. Some are so utterly filthy and abominable, eating human excreta being a detail, that even amongst the Parayans, themselves dirty to a degree and accustomed to anything but a high class diet, very few are able to undergo them. Many try, and are unable to proceed. But the man who has gone through them all is a terror. He can make himself invisible, and he can turn himself at will into any animal in order to accomplish his desires. There occurs now and then the death of a woman—a Nâyar or other—enceinte for the first time, the fœtus having been removed for use in black magic.*

The Parayan magician, or Ôḍiyan as he is sometimes called, being a pastmaster in Ôḍi, is credited with power to render himself invisible, using such a fœtus; and even without it, he may force a woman to leave her house at midnight and meet him. There would seem to be some connection, however obscure, with hypnotism and this latter. The Parayan, who turns himself into a bullock, in such guise, circumambulates a house thrice; then, still by means of magic, he compels a certain woman of the household to come out to him. If we follow up popular belief, we find that the Nâyar woman so drawn out of her house is bound to die within three days. But as it is well in a description of this kind, to proceed by illustration when possible, I will quote an authenticated story of a woman having been compelled to leave her house by night. The "walking the dæsil" by the bullock, one of those imaginative performances difficult to account for in human belief, must be left out of the story as no one is said to have seen it.

A Nâyar noticed that, for some days, his wife, who was (contrary to the usual custom, as we have seen it to be) living in his house, appeared to be under some occult influence; and under a premonition that something was

* Not very long ago there was a case of this kind, not far from Palghat, and not only was the fœtus removed but a wisp of straw was substituted in its place; apparently with an idea that, if the space were filled up somehow, the wretched woman would not die!